



ETC Status Report

Prepared by
Center for Governmental Studies
Northern Illinois University
DeKalb, Illinois
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Introduction

The ETC Status Report is an effort to summarize the results of the evaluation activities undertaken during previous year. During the first year of implementation, there were three major activities. The first was a public opinion survey that attempted to gather baseline data on the attitudes and opinions of Illinois citizens on the major components of the ETC initiative. This survey was conducted by the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University.

The second evaluation activity emerged from the Year Two Plan Review process. In the course of conducting the Year Two Plan Reviews, the review team was required to complete a review guide that summarized their judgements about the status of the local partnership. The reviews examined two specific areas of concern. First, the team examined the partnership to determine the degree to which ETC requirements were met and to review the initial efforts to plan for long term sustainability. Next, the team assessed the school-based, work-based, and connecting activity components to determine the partnerships progress to date. This evaluation activity involved taking the information gathered from these reviews and producing a statewide summary of progress of the ETC Partnerships.

The third evaluation activity was an effort by the ETC Evaluation Subcommittee to gather feedback from the ETC Partnerships. In May of 1999, the ETC Evaluation Subcommittee conducted a survey in order to gather the advice of local coordinators in setting evaluation priorities. The survey asked the partnerships to identify the percent of time that the state should devote to various evaluation areas and the percent of time it should devote to gathering and evaluating different types of student data.

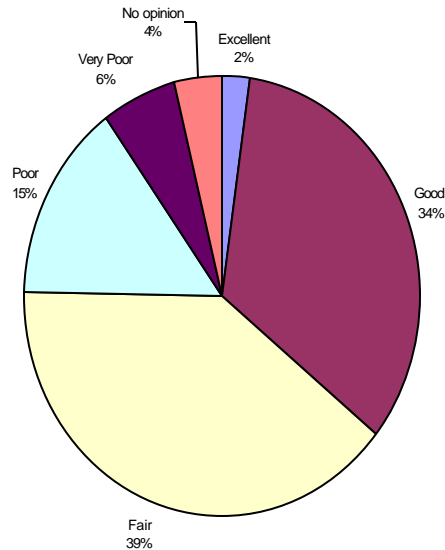
I. Public Opinion Poll of Attitudes Toward Education

In order to obtain baseline information on public attitudes toward ETC, the Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University (Center) was contracted to add several ETC-related questions to its annual public opinion survey. The results are presented below.

Poll Methodology. The Illinois Policy Survey is based on a telephone survey of the Illinois adult population, aged 18 and older. Some 800 Illinois adults were interviewed between November 1998 and January 1999. The combined result of sampling and weighting procedures is a representative sample of the English-speaking adult population of Illinois that is accessible by telephone. The conservative 95 percent confidence interval for a sample of 800 individuals is plus or minus 3.5 percent.¹

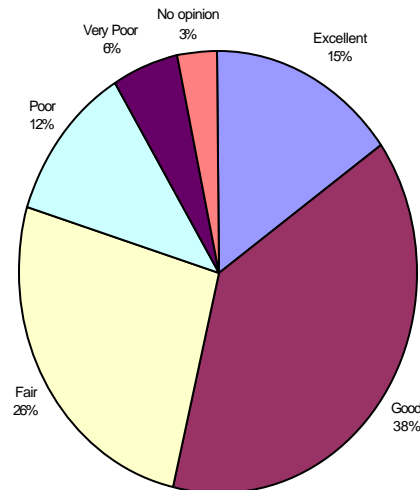
Responses on Overall Quality of Illinois' Public Schools. Respondents were asked to rate the overall quality of public schools in Illinois. Then they were asked to do the same for the public schools in their own community or neighborhood. Seventy three percent rated the public schools in the state as fair or good; only 2.3 % rated the schools as excellent. At the local level, the fair or good rating totaled only 64.4% of the respondents, but the percent rating the schools as good or excellent was much higher than for the state as a whole [53.7% versus 35.9%]. This large of a gap in the very positive ratings may suggest an image problem for the Illinois schools overall and perhaps defines a benchmark for monitoring improvement.

Question 1: *How would you rate the overall quality of public schools in Illinois? Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?*



¹See Cynthia Nelson, *The Illinois Policy Survey 1998*, DeKalb, IL: Center for Governmental Studies, Northern Illinois University.

Question 2: *How would you rate the overall quality of public schools in your own community or neighborhood? Would you say they are excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor?*



What Schools Should Be Doing. Eight areas of program content were put before the respondents to determine their opinion on whether each should be emphasized. Nearly 77% of the respondents *disagree* that schools should only be concerned with "reading, writing, and arithmetic". Rather, strong support was voiced for other features of school program content, especially those that are components of the ETC initiative. The results are as follows:

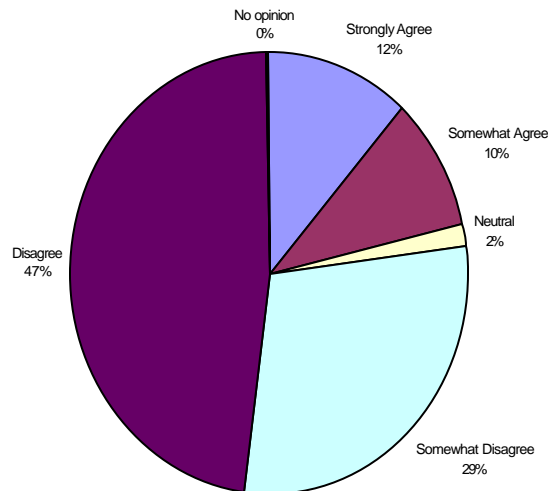
Questions Regarding What Illinois Schools Should Do For Students

Question	Agreed		Neutral	Disagreed	
	Strongly	Somewhat		Somewhat	Strongly
<i>Schools should provide students with information about different careers</i>	74.1%	22.1%	1.0%	1.6%	1.0%
<i>Schools should help prepare students for work by teaching them how to work in a group or on a team.</i>	69.9	22.3	2.0	4.0	1.4
<i>Schools should, where possible, combine basic studies with real life work experience</i>	59.5	28.5	2.6	5.8	3.1
<i>Schools should help students learn about different careers through visits to work sites and internships</i>	61.3	27.0	1.6	6.0	3.5
<i>Schools should help students plan for careers in which they are interested</i>	65.8	26.4	2.1	3.8	1.5
<i>Schools should offer opportunities for students to gain work experience prior to high school graduation</i>	58.1	27.0	2.5	8.5	3.8

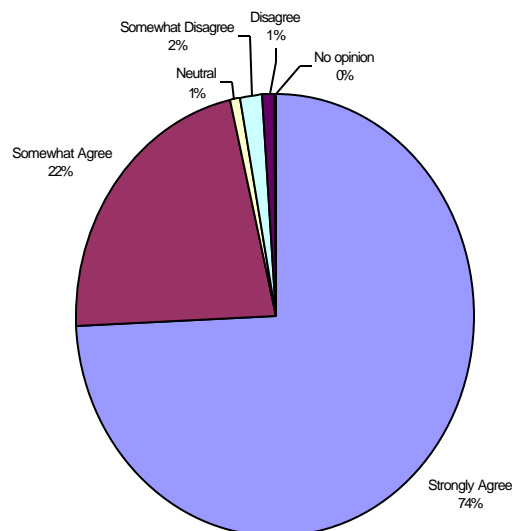
Note: For some questions, the percentages do not add up to 100 percent due to respondents that had no opinion.

Only with offering students opportunities to gain work experience before high school graduation did the total of disagreements among the respondents exceed 10%.

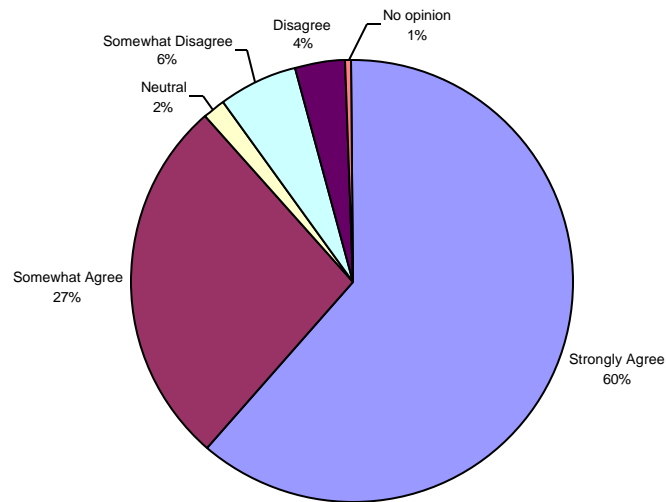
Question 3: *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Schools should only be concerned with teaching the three Rs (reading, writing, arithmetic). Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?*



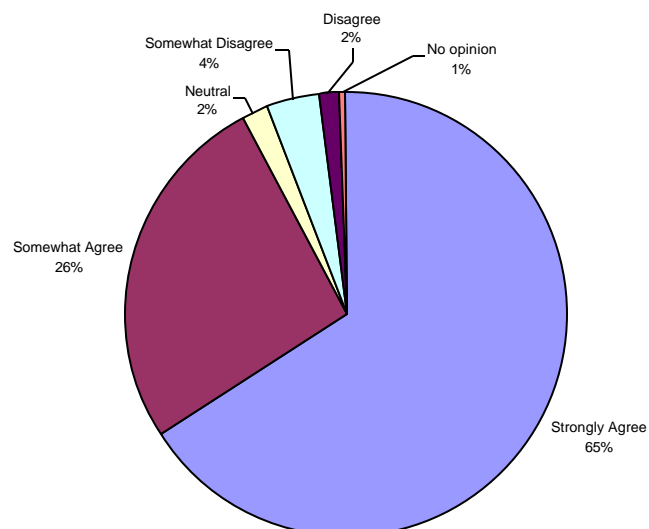
Question 4: *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Schools should provide students with information about different careers. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?*



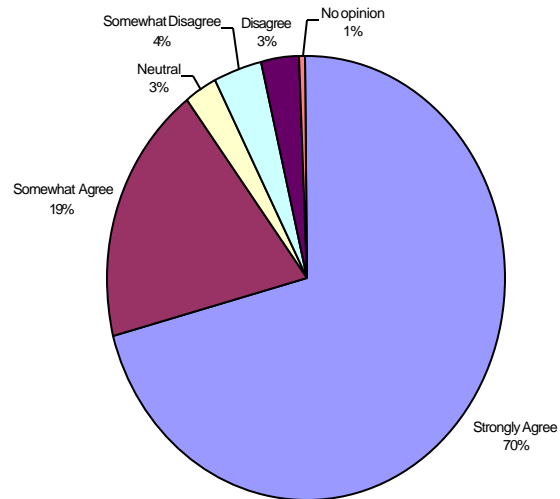
Question 5: *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Schools should help prepare students for work by teaching them how to work in a group or on a team. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?*



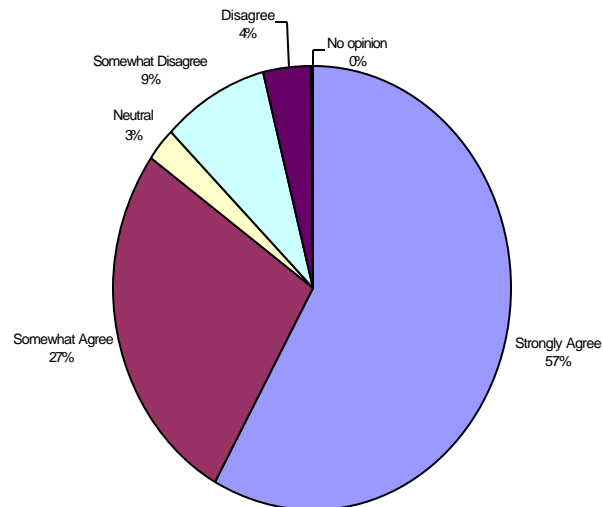
Question 6: *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Schools should, where possible, combine basic studies with real life work experience. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?*



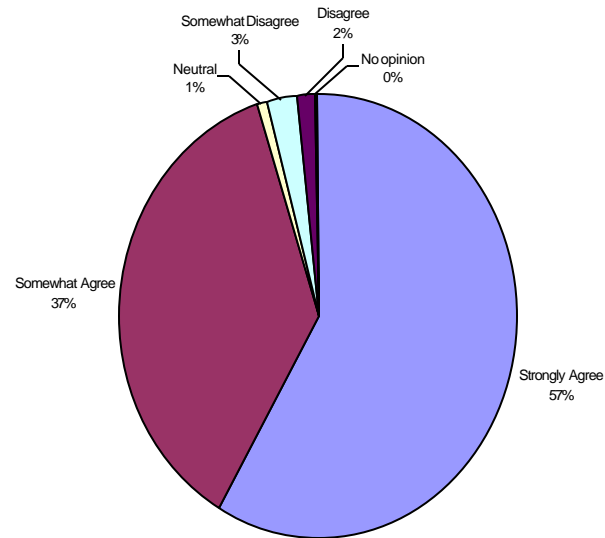
Question 7: *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Schools should help students learn about different careers through visits to work sites and internships. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?*



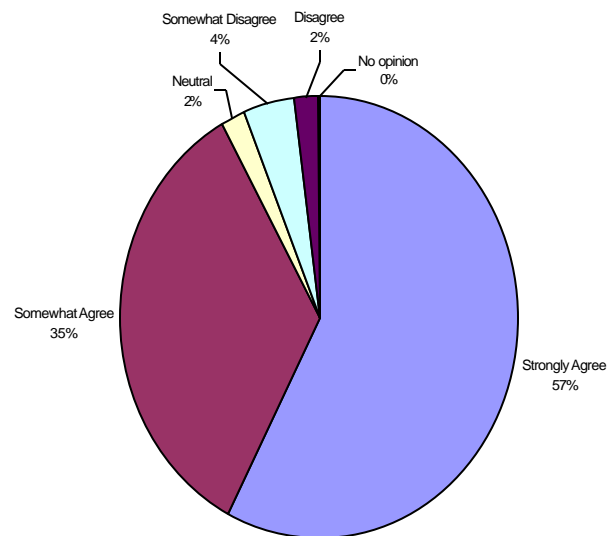
Question 8: *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Schools should help students plan for careers in which they are interested. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?*



Question 9: *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Schools should offer courses that prepare students to become better citizens. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?*



Question 10: *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Schools should offer opportunities for students to gain work experience prior to high school graduation. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?*



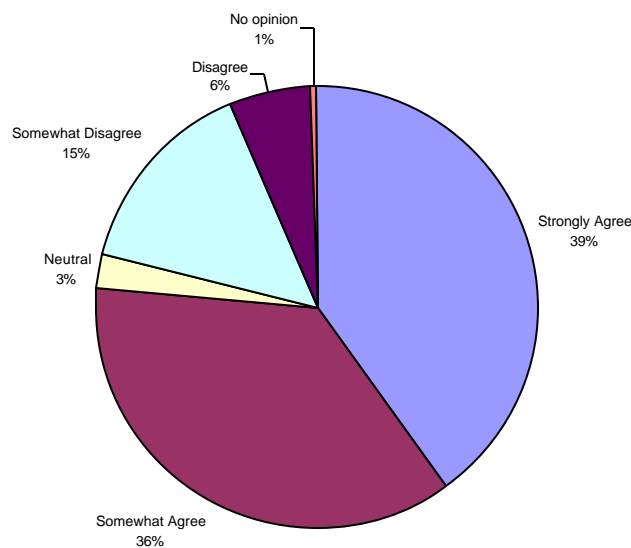
What Students Should Know or Have Upon Graduation. Respondents were asked to consider four questions regarding what students should know or have planned for when they graduate. Distinctly, Illinois adults favor requiring that students pass a test on basic academic skills as a requirement for graduation. Three-fourths of the respondents strongly agree with such a test as a requirement and another 17% somewhat agree.

Three questions probed career planning for students. Ninety five percent of the respondents agree that students should have a general knowledge about different types of careers and 92% agree that students should have an idea of careers that interest them. Support weakens on going so far as to expect students to have a well formed plan for what they will do after high school graduation. Only 40% of the respondents strongly support this and nearly 21% disagree with the expectation. This was the strongest degree of disagreement among the questions regarding school program features and expectations of students.

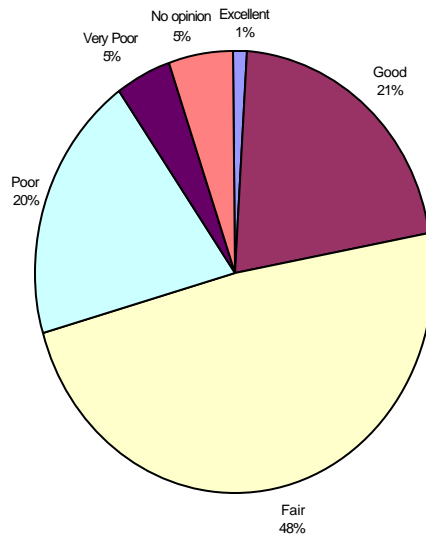
Questions Regarding what Students Should Know Upon Graduation

Question	Agreed		Neutral	Disagreed	
	Strongly	Somewhat		Somewhat	Strongly
<i>Students should have a general knowledge about different types of careers</i>	58.4%	38.6%	.8%	2.5%	1.5%
<i>Students should have an idea of the different types of careers that interest them</i>	57.5	34.5	1.8	4.4	1.8
<i>Students should have a well formed plan for what they will do after high school graduation.</i>	39.9	36.4	2.8	14.8	6.0

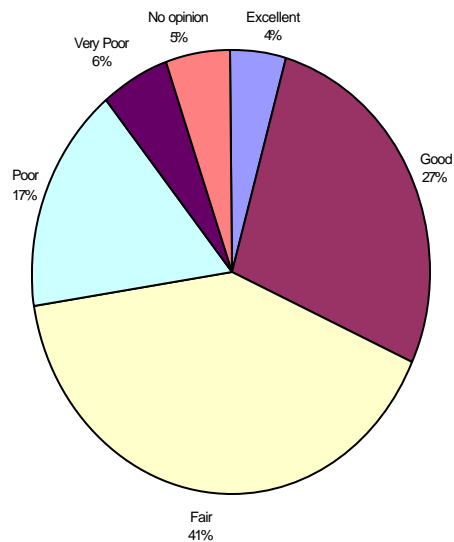
Question 11: *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Students should be required to pass a standardized test on basic academic skills as a requirement for graduation. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?*



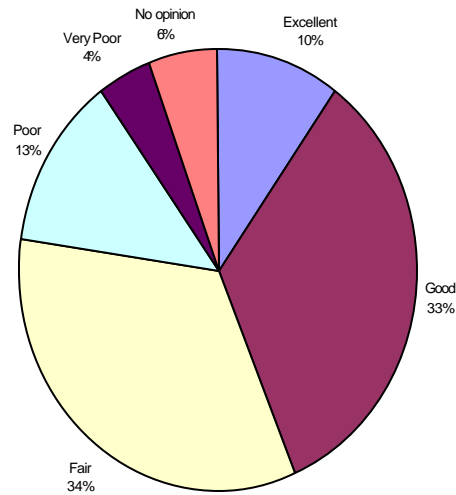
Question 12: *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Students should have a general knowledge about different types of careers. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?*



Question 13: *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Students should have an idea of the different types of careers that interest them. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?*



Question 14: *Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statement: Students should have a well formed plan for what they will do after high school graduation. Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, neutral, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree?*

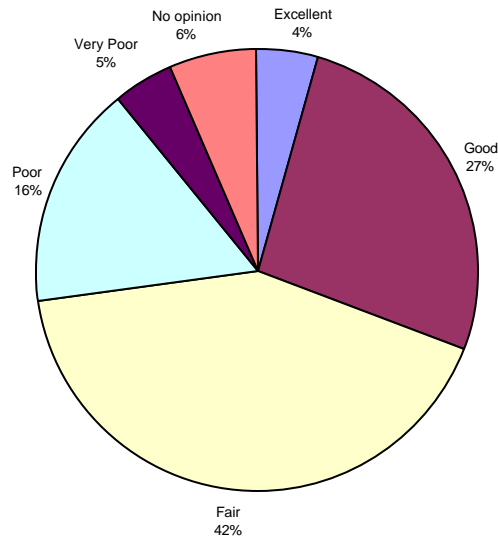


Rating Illinois Schools on the General Preparedness of Students. Two questions were asked to assess how well the respondents thought Illinois schools do in preparing students for college and for entry into the workplace. The predominant rating for both is "fair". Just over one third of the respondents rate the schools as good in preparing students for college. For entry into the workplace, respondents were essentially split between good versus poor ratings, each at about 20%. As with the overall quality ratings, the respondents seem cautious in their ratings of the schools, suggesting an image problem or a real concern about student preparedness.

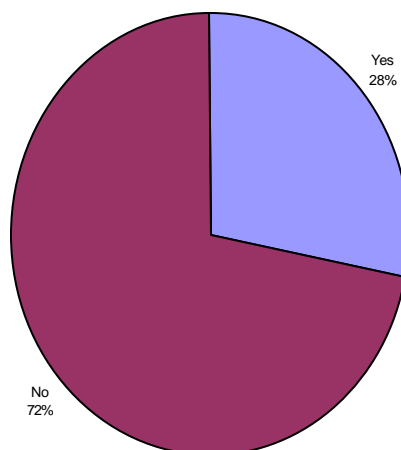
How Well Does the Illinois School System Prepare Students

Preparedness Area	Rating of Excellent or Good	Rating of Fair	Rating of Poor or Very Poor
For College	37.3%	42.6%	15.5%
Entry into the Workplace	21.1	48.3	24.3

Question 15: *How well do you think the Illinois school system prepares students for college? Would you say the school system does an excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor job?*



Question 16: *How well do you think the Illinois school system prepares students to enter the workplace? Would you say the school system does an excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor job?*



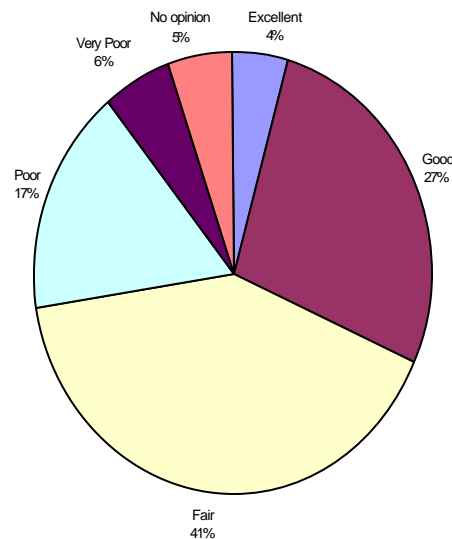
Respondents Rate Their Local School Systems in Preparing Students. The interviews asked the respondents to rate their local school schools in preparing students to be good citizens, for college, and for entry into the workplace. The responses show a continued cautiousness.

How Well Does the Local School System Prepare Students

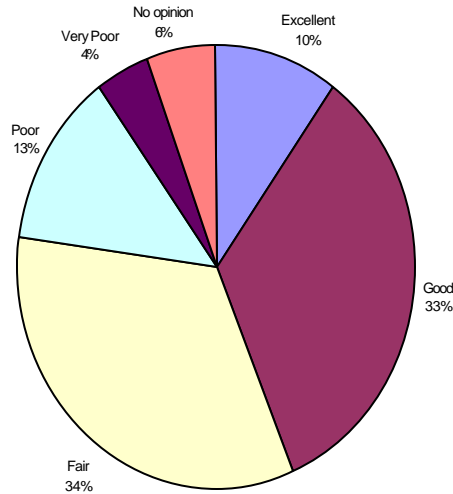
Preparedness Area	Rating of Excellent or Good	Rating of Fair	Rating of Poor or Very Poor
Citizenship	31.8%	40.9%	22.1%
For College	43.7	33.5	17.3
Entry into the Workplace	30.9	42.0	20.8

Local schools are rated as doing their best job in preparing students for college with over two-fifths of the respondents giving very positive ratings. Only about 31% ascribe very positive ratings to the schools for preparing students to be good citizens and for entry into the workplace. In each preparedness area, about one-fifth of the respondents accord negative ratings to their schools.

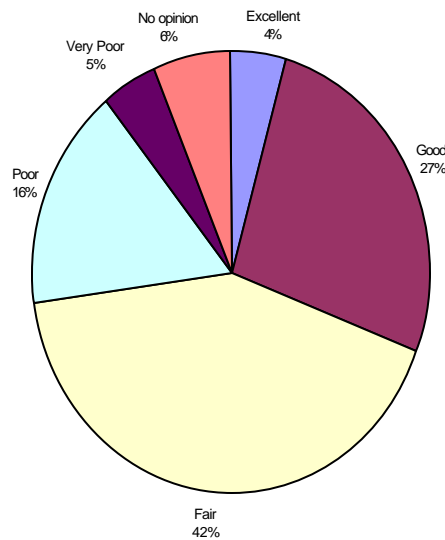
Question 17: *How well do you think your local schools prepare students to be come good citizens? Would you say the school system does an excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor job?*



Question 18: *How well do you think your local schools prepare students for college? Would you say the school system does an excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor job?*

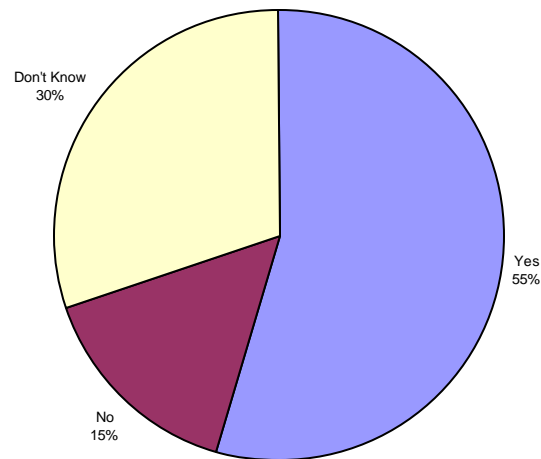


Question 19: *How well do you think your local schools prepare students to enter the workplace? Would you say the school system does an excellent, good, fair, poor, or very poor job?*

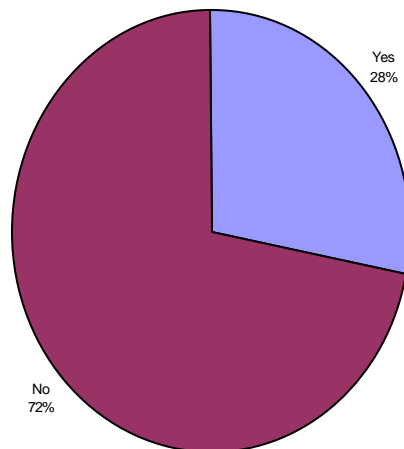


Awareness of Work Experience Programs. Finally, respondents were queried as to whether they knew if their local schools offered a program allowing students to gain work experience while still in school. Over half responded that their local schools did have such a program. Among those who said yes, that their schools had such a program, only 28% could offer the name of the program.

Question 20: *Do schools in your area currently offer a program that allows students to gain work-related experience while in school?*



Question 21: *Do you recall the name of the program?*



II. Local Partnership Year-Two Plan Reviews

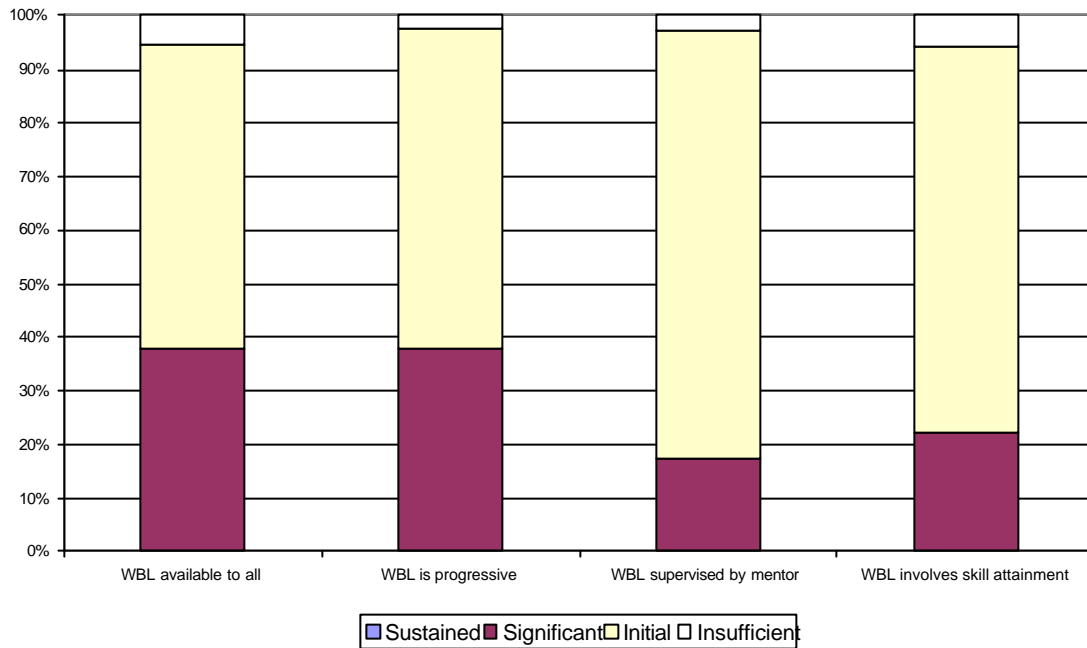
In the course of conducting the Year-Two Plan Reviews, each review team was required to complete a review guide that summarized their collective judgments regarding the status of the local partnership. The reviews examined two specific areas of concern. First, the team examined whether the general ETC requirements were met by the partnership. Specifically, the partnership was reviewed to determine if it had (1) broad based and sustained participation,, (2) management, administrative and staffing structures in place, (3) informed all elementary, secondary and post-secondary sites, and (4) procedures in place to ensure all students are provided equal access. In all cases for which data is available, the answers to these questions were a uniform "yes."

The second area of concern, and the focus of this section, was the progress of the partnerships with regard to three major categories of activities. These were school-based learning, work-based learning, and connecting activities.

School-Based Learning. According to the review teams, the most progress has been made in providing all students with the opportunity to become aware of career options. The majority of the partnerships [61.2%] were found to have made, at least, significant progress in area. Less than a third of the partnership were considered by the review teams as having made significant progress on the remaining four activities that were evaluated although the vast majority were reported to have made initial progress.

School Based-Learning

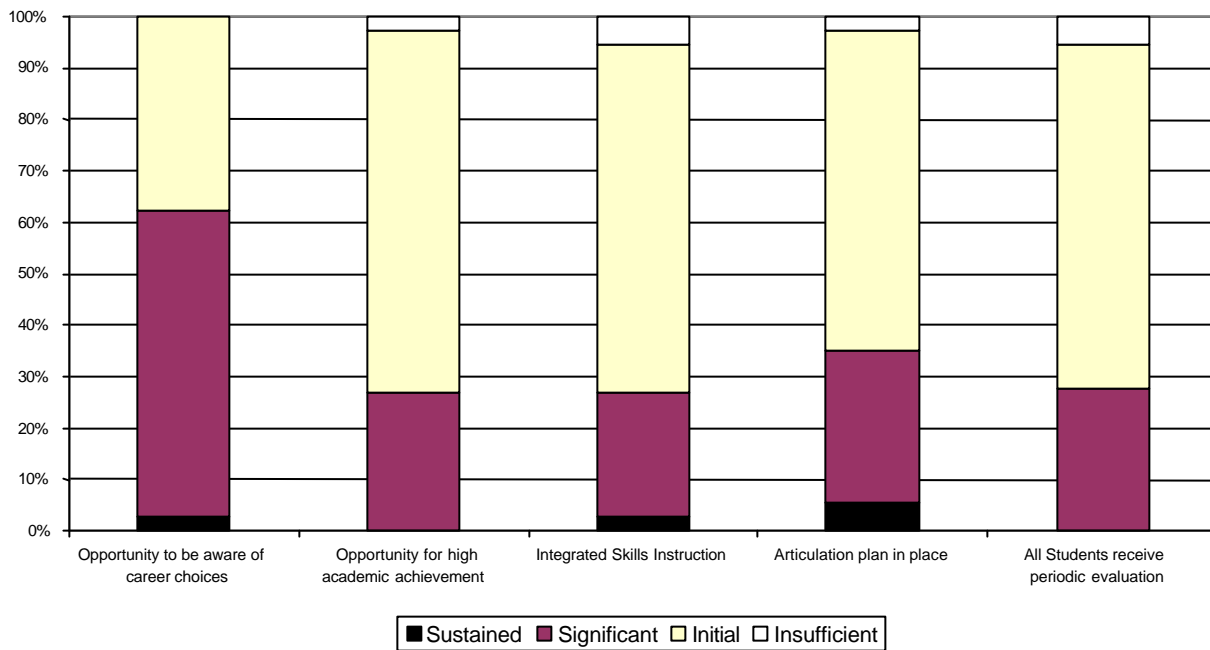
Criteria	Percent of Partnerships Achieving			
	Sustained Progress	Significant Progress	Initial Progress	Insufficient Progress
<i>All Students have the opportunity to become aware of the full range of options, will be able to make an informed career choice, and will be provided with opportunities to select a career focus for further study</i>	2.7%	59.5%	37.8%	0%
<i>All students have the opportunity to achieve high academic skills</i>	0	27.0	70.3	2.7
<i>Instruction includes academic skills, workplace skills and technical skills taught in an integrated manner</i>	2.7	25.3	67.6	5.4
<i>All programs include an articulation plan to assist students in the transition to postsecondary education.</i>	5.4	29.7	62.2	2.7
<i>All students undergo periodic evaluation to assess progress in academic, workplace and technical skills</i>	0	27.0	67.6	5.4



Work-Based Learning. With regard to work-based learning, the review teams characterized over one third of the partnerships as having made significant progress making work-based learning available to all students and in providing a progressive array of work-based learning experiences. The review teams judged the partnerships as making less progress in the areas of providing all students with trained workplace mentors and in including general workplace or industry-specific skills development in all work-based activities. However, it should also be noted that nearly all partnerships were assessed as making, at least, some initial progress in each of these areas.

Work Based Learning

Criteria	Percent of Partnerships Achieving			
	Sustained Progress	Significant Progress	Initial Progress	Insufficient Progress
<i>A work-based learning experience is available to all students</i>	0%	37.8%	56.8%	5.4%
<i>Work-based learning is progressive in nature, includes pre-employment and employment skills, and is coordinated with school-based learning</i>	0	37.8	59.5	2.7
<i>All students participating in work-based learning are supervised by a trained workplace mentor</i>	0	16.7	80.6	2.8
<i>All work-based learning experiences include general workplace skills, skills relevant to a specific industry, and all aspects of the industry as defined by the STW Act.</i>	0	21.6	73.0	5.4

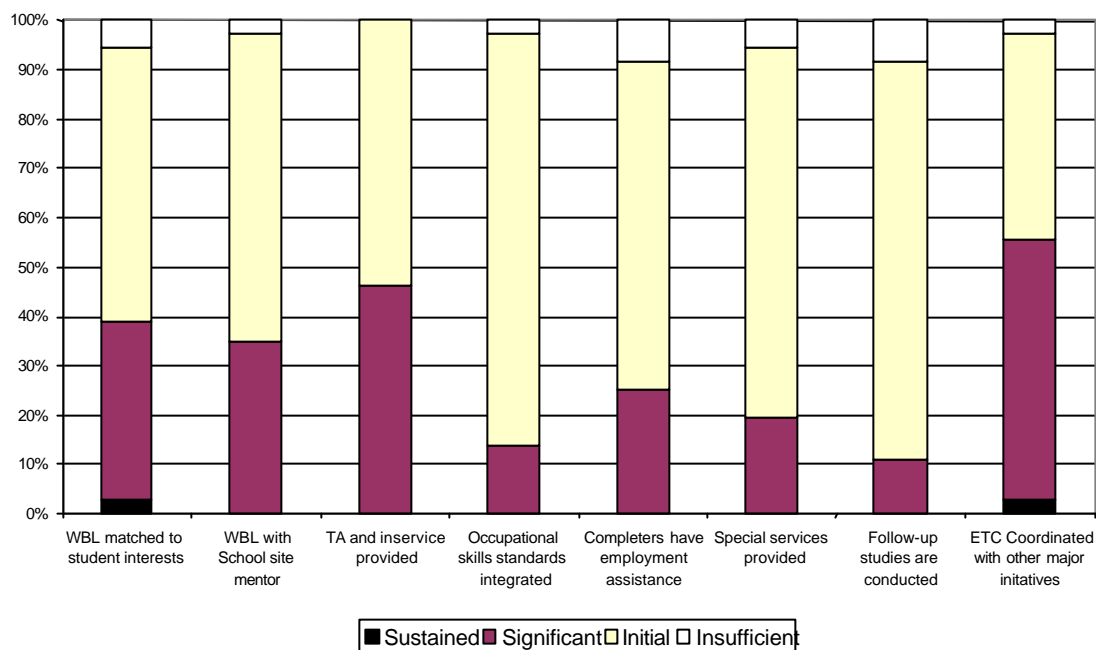


Connecting Activities. A review of the progress made with respect to connecting activities, reveals that the greatest progress has occurred with coordinating ETC activities with other state initiatives. The review teams judged over 50 percent of the partnerships as making, at least, significant progress in this area. Over a third of the partnerships were also found to have made significant progress in (1) matching work-based experiences with the student's interest and abilities, (2) establishing a school-site mentor as liaison between the school and work-site, and (3) providing technical assistance and inservice on ETC to employers, teachers, mentors and counselors. Finally, less than a quarter of the partnerships evaluated have made significant progress in the areas of skill standards integration, providing employment assistance and special services, and in conducting follow-up studies. Once again, however, it should be noted that nearly all partnerships were assessed as making, at least, some initial progress in each of these areas.

Connecting Activities

Criteria	Percent of Partnerships Achieving			
	Sustained Progress	Significant Progress	Initial Progress	Insufficient Progress
<i>Students are matched to work-based learning experiences according to interests and ability</i>	0%	36.1%	55.6%	8.4%
<i>All work-based learning experiences have a school-site mentor as a liaison between the school and work-site</i>	0	35.1	62.2	2.7
<i>Technical assistance and inservice on ETC is provided for employers, teachers, workplace mentors, school-site mentors and counselors</i>	0	45.9	54.1	0

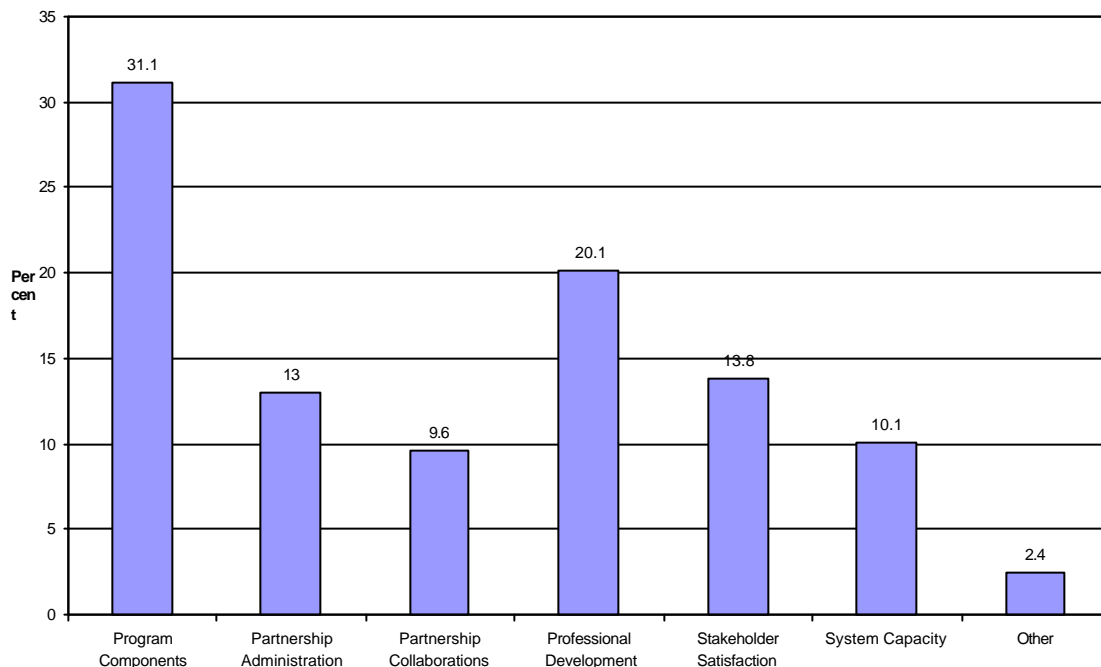
Criteria	Percent of Partnerships Achieving			
	Sustained Progress	Significant Progress	Initial Progress	Insufficient Progress
<i>Schools and employers are assisted in integrating occupational skill standards and associated credentialing into the educational process</i>	0	13.5	83.8	2.7
<i>Completers are assisted in finding employment in appropriate career paths</i>	0	24.3	67.6	8.1
<i>Program participants requiring special services to enable them to fully participate in ETC are linked to appropriate community services</i>	0	19.4	75.0	5.6
<i>Follow-up studies on program completers are conducted</i>	0	10.8	81.1	8.1
<i>Local Partnerships coordinate ETC with other major initiatives such as the Education for Employment and community college Perkins funded initiative, one-stop career centers. Special education, JTPA youth programs and other relevant efforts</i>	5.4	51.4	40.5	2.7



III. Local Partnership Evaluation Priority Survey

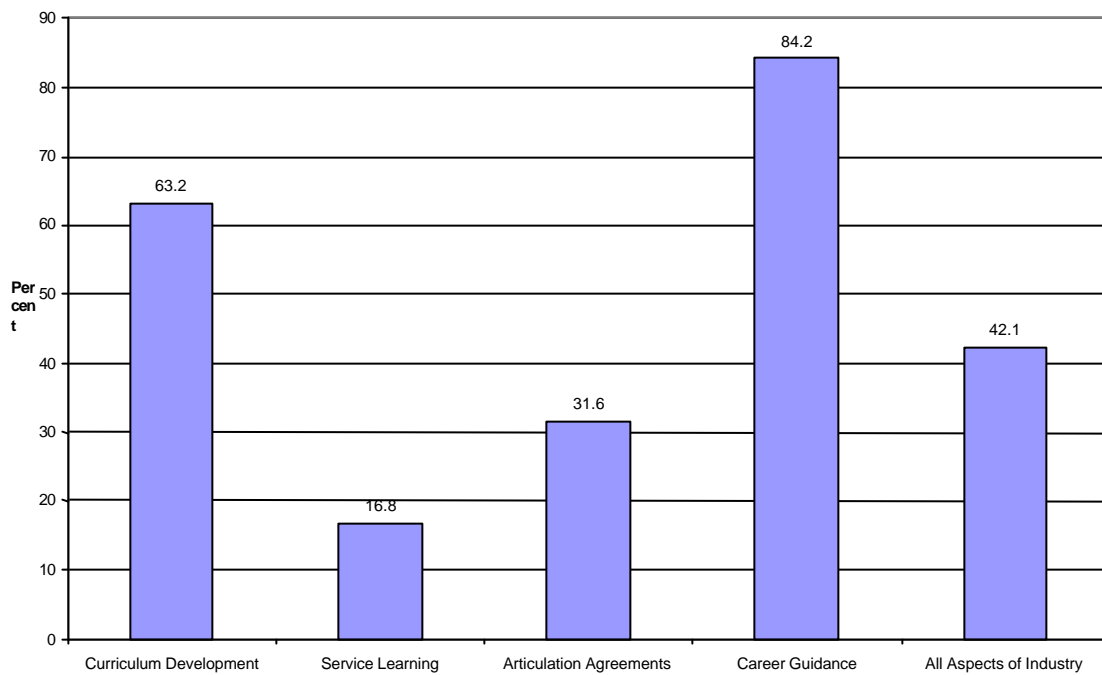
The ETC Evaluation Subcommittee asked each of the 39 local partners to provide assistance in setting priorities for time allocation among alternative evaluation issues. 19 local partners responded. Their guidance is summarized in the following three charts.

Question 1: *Please indicate the percent of time you feel that the State should devote to each of the following evaluation areas: program components; partnership administration issues; partnership collaborations; professional development; stakeholder satisfaction; system capacity; other.*



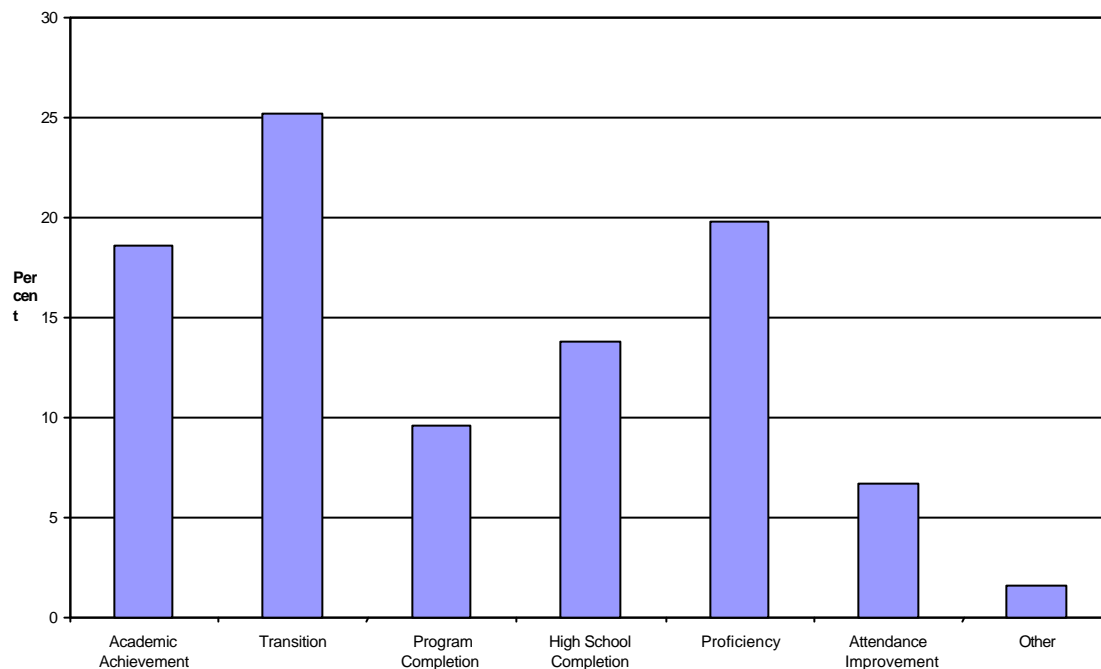
Responding partners suggest that "program components" be the focus of about a third of the evaluation effort [time]. The second highest priority is suggested for evaluating "professional development" opportunities. Together, these two evaluation areas are recommended for just over 50% of the evaluation effort.

Question 1a: Please indicate which components you feel are a priority:



Among the program components, the respondents expressed strongly that the priority components for evaluation should be "career guidance" [84.2% of the respondents] and "curriculum development" [63.2% of the respondents].

Question 2: Please indicate the percent of time you feel that the State should devote to gathering and evaluating the following types of student data: academic achievement; transition into post secondary, technical training, or employment; program completion; high school completion; proficiency in workplace readiness skills; attendance improvements; other.



Note: Not all respondents assigned time to each of the evaluation areas.

With respect to the time [level of effort] given to gathering and evaluating student data, the responses suggest no strong sense of priority among differing measurement or monitoring areas. Respondents suggest that about two-thirds of the effort be given to data and evaluation of three student performance areas: "transition into post-secondary, technical training, or employment" [25.2% of the effort]; assaying "workforce readiness" [19.8% of the effort]; and "academic achievement" [18.6% of the time].